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TO THE VANGUARD

AND OTHER SONGS TO THE SEVEN DIVISIONS

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TO THE VANGUARD AND OTHER SONGS

TO THE SEVEN DIVISIONS

BICKERS & SONS, Ltd
15 Charles Street
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To the Fallen, the Disabled, the Prisoners,
and those still Fighting.

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TO THE VANGUARD

OH little mighty Force that stood for England!
That, with your bodies for a living shield,
Guarded her slow awaking, that defied
The sudden challenge of tremendous odds
And fought the rushing legions to a stand—
Then stark in grim endurance held the line.
O little Force that in your agony
Stood fast while England girt her armour on,
Held high our honour in your wounded hands,
Carried our honour safe with bleeding feet—
We have no glory great enough for you,
The very soul of Britain keeps your day!
Procession?—Marches forth a Race in Arms;
And, for the thunder of the crowd's applause,
Crash upon crash the voice of monstrous guns,
Fed by the sweat, served by the life of England,
Shouting your battlecry across the world.

Oh, little mighty Force, your way is ours,
This land inviolate your monument.

ARMY OF AUGUST

FIVE score thousand men at arms marching
in the van.
Bare your heads and stand aside !
See them in their tragic pride
Swinging grandly down the way.
Bandaged feet that never stay ;
Aching eyes that may not sleep
Watch and ward unceasing keep :
Fighting to the blood-choked breath,
Fighting through the gates of death—
See, beyond your praise or tears,
Leading ever down the years,
Salute the men who died.

Where e'er we march they lead the way,
We follow on the beat,
The drum beat of a marching host
Re-echoes from the farthest post.
The endless tramp that calls beyond
Till throbbing heart, and will respond.
Oh, follow, follow, none may stay,
They blazed for us the scarlet way
To track their unseen feet.

Where e'er we fight they fight ahead,
We feel their ghostly shield,
The force that never knows defeat
Is with us where the Armies meet
And men go up to battle, then

We know our strength,—the Souls of men.
We see them fighting swift and strong,
We hear them cheering us along,
On every shell swept field.

Five score thousand men at arms marching in
the van.
Bare your heads, and stand aside!
Immortal, though for you they died.
England, our Land, awake at last,
Across thy heart they're marching past.
Living, they suffered all for thee,
Dying, they led thy sons to thee,
Thine everlasting pride.

GUNS OF LE CATEAU

Guns of the Fifth Division on you depend this day
The destinies of Europe,—you cover here the way,
If you go, then the army goes,
And Paris lies before her foes.

WE have fought since early morning
And the end is drawing near;
They knew we had no warning
Of the odds that face us here.
We have fought since early morning,
They knew we had no warning
Of the trap before us yawning,—
But we've pulled the army clear.

We have fought the fires of hell,
My guns, O my guns!
Fought together what befell,
My guns, O my guns!
We have fought the fires of hell,
Fought together what befell,
And you served our need right well,
My guns, O my guns!

The glorious Line are fighting
Like tigers all the day;
And the gunners firing, sighting,
Steady to be slain or slay.
The glorious Line are fighting,
With the gunners firing, sighting,
And we've stunned that host afrighting,
And we've saved the Force to-day.

For our men don't know defeat,
My guns, O my guns!
And they'll give you glory meet,
My guns, O my guns!
For our men don't know defeat,
And they'll give you glory meet,
For you've covered the retreat,
My guns, O my guns!

There's a zone of death around,
Where the hail of shrapnel streams;
And behind they've trenched the ground
So we can't get up the teams.
There's a zone of death around,
Where the lydite blasts the ground,
So there's no way to be found,
To break through and bring the teams.

But there's not a round to fire,
My guns, O my guns!
And the dead are piling higher,
My guns, O my guns!
But there's not a round to fire
And the dead are piling higher,
And the orders to retire.
My guns, O my guns!

You are battered, smashed and shaken,
And the foe will profit naught,
All your sights and breech-blocks taken—
Left, the havoc they have wrought.
    You are battered, smashed and shaken,
    All that we can carry taken,
    And we leave you here forsaken,
    By the dead with whom you fought.

But I swear by God's own name,
    My guns, O my guns!
I will bring you back again,
    My guns, O my guns!
From Berlin, across the slain
Every yard of fire and pain,
I will bring you back again,
    My guns, O my guns!

NERY

(To the MOTHERS of Captain BRADBURY, V.C., and Lieut. MUNDY, L. Battery, R.H.A.)

OUR sons fell at Nery,
We are proud.
They were our only sons
And all our life was in them. They endowed
Our days with sweetness. They were all
The meaning and the music of our days.
With heads unbowed
We face the ravished years.
They fell at Nery,
We are proud.

England remember Nery
And rejoice!
It is your privilege,
Your old heroic birthright—When your voice
Calls where the odds are greatest—there
All splendid and victorious die your sons.
These made swift choice
To claim their right and leave
The heritage of Nery.
Oh, rejoice!

"THEIR JOB"

WHEN Regulars went on their regular job
To fight in the regular way,
When every munition of war was short
And a laggard land at bay.

When every Platoon did Battalion's work,
While Officers fought till they fell,
Fought through the day but to fight all night
The fresh flung horde of hell.

Fought when the guns were overwhelmed
In number, size, and power,
Fought while the column dealt out shells
Reckoned in sums per hour.

Fought while they marched the nightmare leagues,
Or crawled when their feet were done,
Fought while they scraped a shallow trench—
They fought—and by God they won !

Now Divisions hold what Battalions held
With an army in strong support,
And cover is found in a world underground,
In the land where the vanguard fought.

For every gun that speaks from the East,
A giant shouts it dumb,
For every shell that rips our ranks,
Tenfold revenge doth come.

The land is at work to supply our needs,
Well—add to your work your prayers,
God give us grace we may do our job,
Half as well as they did theirs.

SOLDIERS OF YPRES,
1914—1917

"WHO comes? Who gives our password, with the right
To join our ranks?"
"Soldiers of England."
"Nay,"
Not these, we know our own. No host like this
Bore arms for England."
"Yet we are her sons."
"Whence come you"?
"From your Calvary of Ypres.
That holy spot where valour reached a height,
And unsupported, held, and saved the World,
You came more nearly to the high ideal
Of One Who died for men, than e'er you dreamed,
There, where for God and Right—naught else—
you raised
The standard in the face of awful odds
One watch-word only, "duty," on your lips,—
Your passion steadfastly endured, your faith,
Your unconsidered sacrifice has drawn
A world of men aflame to serve the cause.
We are of those who follow where you led.
We hold aloft the standard you bequeathed,
We keep the gate to Britain that you barred,
So dare we fight, and when our task is done
So dare we follow where you serve to-day."

"Now God be thanked, and be you welcome—
friends!"

SHRINE OF THE ROLL OF HONOUR

(*Suggested in St. Paul's, Knightsbridge*).

FIGHTING men who have lost your brothers,
Laid and left them in alien ground,
Heartsick for home and the daisied grass;
Buried them there where armies pass,
Where quiet and rest are never found—
Buried them near where you saw them slain,
And turned you back to the battle again.

Fighting men where the ships are fighting
Over your brothers' hidden sleep;
Death who called them, buried them swift
In sombre caverns where new wrecks drift,
While guns are tolling across the deep.
You spoke a prayer where you saw them slain,
And turned you back to the battle again.

Fighting men by God's quiet Altar
Day by day are your brothers named.
Here where the flag they died for stands,
Lilies are piled by faithful hands
Before the Roll in glory framed.
We tend the lamp before the slain,
Turn you back to the battle again.

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A Private Christmas Card

(Included by Request)

TO THE

61st BATTERY R.F.A.

Six One !
Six One !
Here's to you Six One !
Christmas on the Western Front. Christmas on the sea.
Christmas, 1916, I wonder where you be ?
There's many mighty fighters have flashed across the Front,
But two long years, and half a year, you've stood to bear the brunt,
You don't think much about it, but at home we don't forget
The men who went that August, and, thank God, are fighting yet.
You met the Hun that August when the odds were five to one.
(That's in men—but tell me, Gunners, what the odds were, gun for gun ?)

You hit him at Le Cateau till he couldn't come again.
You fought the road to Paris—you turned him back from Paris—he thought to camp in Paris—
But you hunted him from Paris right across the river Aisne.
Then you blocked the way to Calais, and while soldiers still were few
You held the line that winter while the British Army grew,
Till being skilled in battle, and pounding up the Hun,
They sent you out to fight the Turk, floods, reptiles and the sun.
Here's to you men of SIXTY-ONE, God keep you all the way,
Here's to the Five Divisions that held and saved the day.

Sidders & Son, Kensington, W.8

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